

CHURCHES

Duxbury Clipper

Wednesday, April 24, 2002

Historic High Street Methodist Church Groundbreaking



On hand for the ceremonies were l-r: Barry Bell, Neil Bowler, Bill Morris, Shirley Rousseau, Rev. Barbara Cann, Trustee Don Nelson, Contractor Sam Barnard, Linda Anderson, Bob Keaggy, and Brad Kell. An addition to the historic church in West Duxbury should be completed in about 10 months.

Sunday, April 21 was a glorious spring day with gentle clouds dappling a bright blue sky.

Against this backdrop, Rev. Barbara Cann, contractor Sam Barnard, and the congregation were on hand to break ground for the 4,062 sq. ft. addition to the historic United Methodist Church of Duxbury at the corner of High and Taylor streets.

The brief ceremony began with a greeting after which those gathered sang, "The Church's One Foundation." The pastor, Rev. Cann, led the opening prayer and Don Nelson, trustee and lifelong church member, made the opening comment. He spoke for all when he said that after all the building committee's efforts they were excited to see the physical beginnings of the new addition. Nelson opened with the theme which marked the ceremony:- that more space would empower the congregation to serve the community in more ways than had been previously possible.



Better than a sandbox for Tessa Kell and Tess Paynotta

Before he drove the shovel into the newly softened dirt, Rev. Cann said, To the glory of God, in the presence of this congregation, I now direct that ground be broken for the addition to High Street United Methodist Church. The responsibility and the privilege rest upon us to cause a building to rise here that shall be a house of this people of God and a place devoted to the service of almighty God and to the glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." She then shared a note from Wendell D. Luke. Rev. Luke was the district



Barry Bell, Bill Morris and Shirley Rousseau dig.

superintendent and is now the assistant to Bishop Susan B. Hassinger. In his note he remembered with great fondness and respect the people and work of High Street United Methodist Church. He offered his own celebrations and well wishes to the church's new growth.

Members of the building committee include Don Nelson, Robert Keaggy, Linda Anderson, Barry Bell, Neil Bowler, Bill Morris, Shirley Rousseau, and Brad Kell. Each took turns breaking ground with the ceremonial shovel. Even the children and youth, with bright plastic shovels in honor of the occasion, shoveled dirt for the ground breaking.

The congregation then sang, "We Are the Church," which echoes the sentiment that "the church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is the people."

Rev. Cann closed the ceremony with a prayer and everyone gathered in the old church hall for coffee, juice, and refreshments.

In 1831, in the Ashdod section of Duxbury, a small Methodist Episcopal Chapel was built. As the life of that Methodist Episcopal congregation progressed, many congregants were laid to rest in the adjoining cemetery. That resting place still stands on Keeler Street as part of the heritage of Duxbury.

In 1867, the congregation had grown to overflowing and a larger site was sought. That site was found on High Street, the busy road to Boston. High Street ran from Duxbury into the urban center of Pembroke. Built on the corner of High and Taylor streets, the new Methodist Church would become a quiet spot "spitting distance" from the general store, post office, blacksmithy and several places of business.

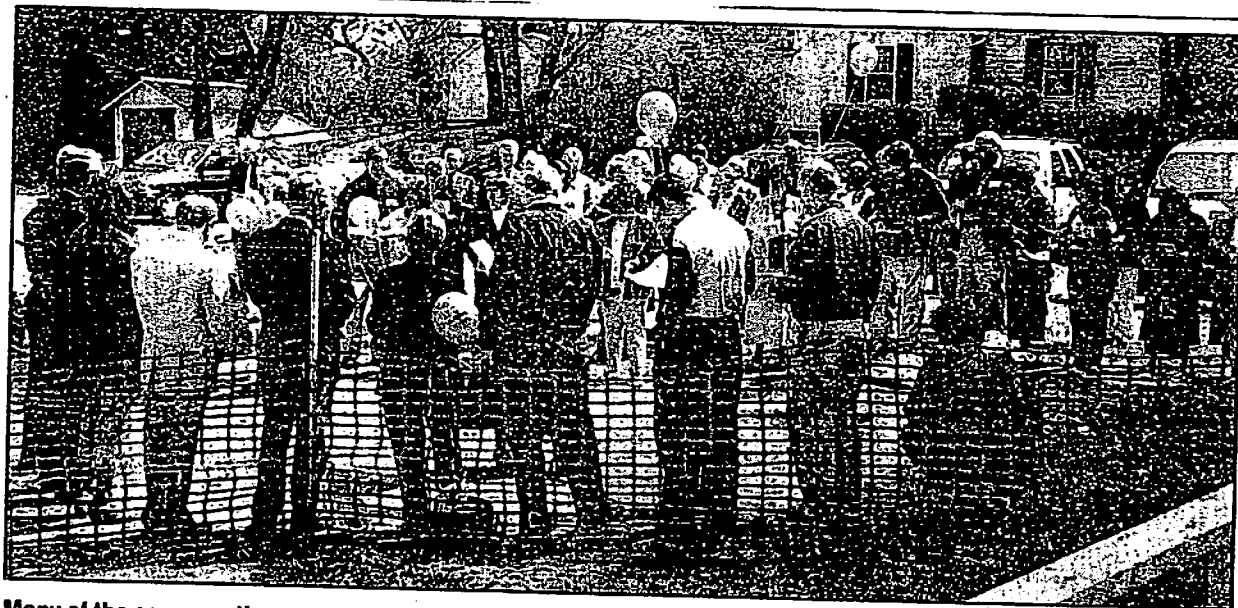
Mr. Lewis Barstow sold the congregation their new lot for an amazing \$250. It would cost another \$7,000 to build the new church in the familiar post civil war fashion of clapboard painted beige with brown trim with a large paneled front entry and an arched window on either side. Taller arched windows lined the second floor sanctuary which was arrived at via a set of two stairways leading off the front entry. The clear paned windows ensured that light would flood the sanctuary on even rainy days.

As time has passed and the landscape of the town has shifted, the once urban sprawl of yesteryear is now a bucolic tapestry of farm, bog, horse pasture, and homes. There on the corner of High and Taylor streets the High Street United Methodist Church still welcomes family, friends, neighbors and strangers to enter and share.

Now it is the church's turn to grow. The home directly across the street from the church, which has always belonged to a church congregant, has been purchased as the parsonage. The Pastor, Rev. Barb Cann and her husband, Rev. James Cann of the Falmouth United Methodist Church, now live full-time in the parsonage, which is serving as Sunday School and Vacation Bible School-Campus as well.

Membership has been increasing, especially in recent months and years. More room is needed to fulfill the ministry.

The former fellowship house has come down to make way for the septic system expansion and parking area.



Many of the congregation were on hand for the start of the project which will add a 4,062 square foot addition to the historic church.

Photos by LAURIE KILGORE



Andrew Croteau digs a shovel.